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COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK IN AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AND STATE AGRICULTURAL COLLEGES,
COOPERATING.

STATES RELATIONS SERVICE, OFFICE OF
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BOYS' AND GIRLS' CLUB WORK.

MARKETING OLD STOCK AND BROILERS.

Prepared by the Animal Husbandry Division, Bureau of Animal Industry, United States Department of Agriculture.

Aside from the production of eggs, members of poultry clubs should consider the revenue that can be derived by disposing of old hens

horns, can usually be kept profitably for three years, and at the end of that time should likewise be marketed.



FIG. 1.—A homemade fattening coop.

that have ceased to be profitable and cockerels that can be sold as broilers.

DISPOSING OF HENS.

The majority of hens after reaching a certain age discontinue laying enough eggs to pay for the feed, care, and attention that they receive. As a rule, hens of the heavier breeds, such as the Plymouth Rocks, cease to produce a profitable number of eggs after they are two years old. Consequently, fowls of this type should be marketed as soon after this time as possible, so that the feed may be fed more profitably to the pullets and younger hens. The lighter breeds, such as the Leg-

Time to market.—Usually the best time to market old hens is during August or when they begin to molt. The number of eggs produced by hens while they are molting is very small, and in the majority of cases no eggs at all are produced during this time.

How to market.—Ordinarily it is not advisable to attempt to fatten hens for market that are two years old or older, for in the majority of instances they are fat enough. However, hens that are not in good flesh should be placed in a coop such as that shown in figure 1 and fed a fattening ration for a week or 10 days before they are killed. By so doing, these fowls, when placed on the market, will be in

a better condition and probably bring a better price. A good fattening ration is:

10 pounds corn meal } Mixed with 15 pounds of skim milk or
5 pounds middlings } buttermilk.

This mixture should be fed morning and noon and cracked corn should be fed for the evening meal. When skim milk or buttermilk is not available, add to the above mixture of corn meal and middlings one-half pound of beef scrap. When skim milk or buttermilk is not fed, green food, such as sprouted oats, cut clover, or alfalfa, should be given to the fowls in order to keep them in good condition. No feed should be given the fowls for at least 24 hours before they are killed. In most cases it is not advisable or profitable to attempt to fatten hens that are to be shipped to market alive unless they are in very poor condition, in which case special feeding as previously mentioned may help to improve them.

How to kill.—The following is suggested as one of the best ways of killing and dressing fowls for market: Suspend the fowl by means of a cord around the feet. Grasp the head of the fowl with the left hand, force the mouth open, and with a knife having a sharp point make a diagonal cut severing the arteries in the back of the throat, just beyond the base of the jaw. The point of the knife is then plunged through the groove in the roof of the mouth to the brain. This causes complete paralysis, loosens the feathers, and allows them to be easily picked. The cutting of the arteries causes the fowl to bleed freely from the mouth. To make the best appearance when placed on the market, the feathers must be carefully picked, so that the skin will not be torn. After picking, the birds should be hung in a cool place, so that all the animal heat is out of them before they are shipped.

MARKETING BROILERS.

An effort should be made to dispose of all cockerels unless they are to be kept for breeders or are to be caponized. Under no circumstances should pullets be marketed as broilers unless they are deformed or poorly developed.

Market classification for broilers.—Broilers are divided into three classes: Squab broilers, broilers, and friers. Squab broilers range in size from $\frac{3}{4}$ of a pound to 1 pound each in weight; broilers from 1 to 2 pounds in weight; and friers, or, as they are sometimes called, large broilers or small roasters, weigh from 2 to $3\frac{1}{2}$ pounds. Generally it is more profitable to dispose of the cockerels when they range from 1 to $2\frac{1}{2}$ pounds in weight.

How to market.—Broilers should be fed a special fattening ration before they are sent to market. This holds true of broilers that are to be shipped alive, as well as of those that are killed before shipping. Broilers to be fattened should be confined in a coop such as is shown in figure 1 for 10 days to 2 weeks and fed a ration that will increase their weight and improve their condition. A good fattening ration for broilers is:

9 pounds corn meal } Mixed with 18 pounds of skim milk
6 pounds middlings } or buttermilk.
3 pounds bran.

This mixture should be fed twice daily in a trough such as shown in figure 1. When skim milk or buttermilk is not available, add to the above mixture 1 pound of beef scrap. Such green food as previously mentioned should likewise be fed to keep the fowls in good condition. The method of killing and dressing as previously described applies to broilers as well as to other fowls intended for market.

NOTE.—This is one of a series of follow-up circulars (the K series) printed for the exclusive use of club members and club leaders. Other persons desiring poultry literature should write to their State agricultural college or ask for bulletins noted below.

PUBLICATIONS OF UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE RELATING TO POULTRY.

AVAILABLE FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION BY THE DEPARTMENT.

- Capons and Caponizing. (Farmers' Bulletin 452.)
- Hints to Poultry Raisers. (Farmers' Bulletin 528.)
- Important Poultry Diseases. (Farmers' Bulletin 530.)
- Boys' and Girls' Poultry Clubs. (Farmers' Bulletin 562.)
- Poultry House Construction. (Farmers' Bulletin 574.)
- Natural and Artificial Incubation of Hens' Eggs. (Farmers' Bulletin 585.)
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- Mites and Lice on Poultry. (Farmers' Bulletin 801.)
- Standard Varieties of Chickens, I. The American Class. (Farmers' Bulletin 806.)
- Marketing Eggs by Parcel Post. (Farmers' Bulletin 830.)
- The Guinea Fowl. (Farmers' Bulletin 858.)
- Backyard Poultry Keeping. (Farmers' Bulletin 889.)
- Standard Varieties of Chickens, II. The Mediterranean and Continental Classes. (Farmers' Bulletin 898.)

FOR SALE BY THE SUPERINTENDENT OF DOCUMENTS, GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE, WASHINGTON, D. C.

- Commercial Fattening of Poultry. (Department Bulletin 21.) Price, 10 cents.
- White Diarrhea of Chicks, with Notes on Coccidiosis in Birds. (Bureau of Animal Industry Circular 128.) Price, 5 cents.
- A System of Poultry Accounting. (Bureau of Animal Industry Circular 176.) Price, 5 cents.
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